

# **Economic Development/Marketing/Grants/CDBG Report**

February 2022

## **Downtown Development News**

- ECD staff and the Mayor's Office continue to work with Wheeler Health on options for a downtown project. Additional information will be presented at the February ECD meeting.
- ECD staff and Mayor's Office are working with the State of Connecticut to evaluate options for the location of a "City Green" on Centre Square. Additional information will be presented at the February ECD meeting.
- City staff has consulted with several businesses/organizations in the downtown area that may be applying for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.
- ECD has applied for several "City Project" ARPA applications that, if funded, would focus on downtown efforts. These projects will be discussed briefly at the February ECD meeting.
- ECD staff and the Mayor's Office are evaluating proposals for new projects on Centre Square.
- ECD is working with several entities on a workforce development initiative to assist businesses, unemployed/underemployed individuals, and many more.
- A monthly update on the J.H. Sessions project will be provided at the February meeting.
- A StartUP Bristol meeting will be held the second week of February to accommodate two downtown grant applications.
- ECD is working with a great startup called Tafika Arts, which is evaluating a "West End" retail location.
- We are working with the Mayor's Task Force on Energy to provide free assistance to businesses.
- Oma's Pride continues toward bringing its manufacturing operations to Bristol to complement the distribution operation that relocated to Valley Street two years ago.
- The Purchasing Department has completed the process of selecting an engineering firm to oversee design of the municipal parking structure to be funded with a \$4.6 million State "Urban Act" grant.

## **Development outside Downtown**

- The City continues to speak with various developers within the cannabis industry on retail/cultivation opportunities.
- Staff is working on several potential projects for the Southeast Bristol Business Park and also the nearby property located between the "ESPN North" building and the business park.
- Staff is working on a plan to begin marketing the 894 Middle Street site via a competitive bid.
- Staff is working with an existing Bristol restaurant interested in relocating/expanding within the City.
- ECD staff has been working with L&R Mechanical Services, an established HVAC company based in a nearby community, on a relocation to 461 Broad Street.

- The City continues to work with the future developers of the former “Theis Steel” site with more information to come soon.
- ECD staff is partnering with the City’s Energy Task Force on a great program to provide free energy efficiency/renewable energy consulting services to businesses undertaking major renovation/new construction projects. Thanks to Sean Dunn for spearheading this.
- We continue to work with the owners of the Nuchies property on the future of their building which may include a private sale and complete renovation of the property to an office use. More to come very soon on this one.
- Route 6:
  - Staff continues to work with a national food franchise planning the construction of a new building on Route 6 near the “KFC” location. More information will be provided in coming months.
  - We are speaking with the developer for the former Ruby Tuesday’s property on its effort to construct two smaller development sites on the property.
  - We continue to communicate with the owner of the large “farm” property directly east of the “Bristol Farms” plaza about interested parties looking to develop the site.

### **Small Business Grants Completed or In Process**

- Valetone Cleaners – Assistance with a new roof
- Better Molded Products – Assistance with the cost of equipment upgrade to secure a contract to bring production back from overseas.
- State Farm Office – assisting Zach Ibanez on renovations to newly acquired building at 258 Middle St.
- The Garden at Pinehurst Farm – Assisting with the purchase of a front entryway
- Sam's Food – Working to assist with an emergency water service issue
- Tommy's Place – Assisting with the buildout of the Stafford Avenue deli/restaurant location
- Cravings – Assisting with signage at the roadway

### **Marketing**

#### **Marketing and Public Relations Initiatives:**

- 1) ECD along with the Mayor, and the Chamber will continue to visit and acknowledge Bristol businesses celebrating milestone anniversaries (30+ years of being in business) in 2022.
- 2) Marketing and public relations is being developed to communicate to the community the timeline for renovation of City Hall and City Department moves to temporary “swing spaces.”
- 3) The KindCare Assisted Living facility construction is underway with a groundbreaking ceremony being planned for mid-March.
- 4) Other downtown development projects: marketing will be developed for all projects that will be coming to Centre Square in the coming months as projects get underway.

### **Grants Administration**

Annual summary of grant activity will be distributed to commissioners at the meeting.

### New Grant Applications:

Working on a grant to the State Historic Preservation Office **Historic Restoration Fund** for the repair of outdoor wooden trim on the historic home of the Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services Department at **51 High Street**. This lead abatement and painting/repair program will involve all exterior wood trim, fascia boards, window and door frames, for an estimated total of approximately \$150,000 (50% to be paid by the City).

**FEMA Fire Prevention & Safety (FP&S) 2022:** We are exploring the option of applying for an FP&S grant to update the Community Risk Assessment that was completed in 2014.

### Ongoing:

#### **Fire Department**

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters (AFG) 2019: Training has concluded for Fire Officer II and Incident Safety Officer programs. The Grants Administrator continues to work with the Bristol Fire Chief to prepare an amendment requesting permission for the expenditure of unallocated funds for additional training.

### CDBG Program Highlights

CDBG Year 47: The second quarter of Year 47 is complete.

CDBG Year 48: Applications for 2022 CDBG funds were due on January 31, 2022, and 15 were received. The first of two Public Hearings is scheduled for Monday, February 14 at 5:00 p.m. in Council Chambers and via Zoom. All commissioners are invited to attend.